"The U.S. and Europe: A Democratic Partnership in Action"

Ambassador Thomas B. Robertson's Speech to the Euro-Atlantic Council and the Slovenian Association for International Relations
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As Prepared for Delivery

Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow ambassadors, and distinguished guests, it is a pleasure for me to be with you today. This is a sad week as we mourn the loss of Pope John Paul II, certainly one of history's great moral leaders, a man who inspired hundreds of millions around the world for the last quarter of a century. One cannot begin a speech at this time on the U.S. European relationship without acknowledging his very real contribution to the democratic revolution that swept through Europe in the eighties and nineties.

My remarks will also be timely, I hope, coming as they do just a month after President Bush's trip to Europe and I think what most of us would agree has been an improvement in both the substance and the atmosphere of the transatlantic relationship. I want to talk about that relationship today.

First let me say thanks to Dr. Bebler and Ambassador Kunič for providing me this opportunity to speak to you. It's nice to have a Euro-Atlantic Council here in Ljubljana. There are times, I have to say, these days when I feel, amongst all the European Union activities going on, the constant trips back and forth to Brussels, that big sucking sound from EU headquarters, that the "Atlantic" angle gets swallowed up a bit. It reminds me of 15 years ago when Mikhail Gorbachev used to speak of the "common European house," and I sometimes had to remind my Soviet and Central European friends that that common European house had a very big and very important North American garage.

It hasn't always been that way, as many of you may know. George Washington, 200 years ago when he left office, advised Americans to avoid entangling alliances, and up until the end of the nineteenth century that view certainly predominated in the United States. And while we did, finally, enter World War I, it was not until 1917, and was as much in response to the sinking of the Lusitania that year as it was a strategic decision to bring an end to the horror that Europe was perpetrating on itself.

A quarter century later, in 1941, with Europe very much in the throes of a new World War, once again the American people did not want to go to war, despite Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to end our neutrality by providing billions of dollars of Lend Lease to the British and the Soviets. It was only with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor that the American people responded with a willingness not only to fight in the Pacific, but to send millions of soldiers to North Africa and Europe to fight for the freedom of Europe and bring an end to Nazism and Fascism. I have had the honor to travel with American and British veterans of the war here in what was Yugoslavia and to visit the graves of allied and Slovenian soldiers who gave their lives to drive the Nazis and Fascists from Slovenia. And I think that we all agree that our partnership in action the was a noble one.

At the end of that war the United States made a commitment not to pull away from Europe, particularly given the threat from Soviet communism and the pall cast on all of Europe by the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain. The creation of NATO was in large part to assure Europe that the United States—and Canada—would be there to assure the security of Western Europe, and that the free nations of Europe needed to invest in their collective security. Today, looking back, there can be no doubt that NATO has been the most successful alliance in history.

It is also worth mentioning the U.S.'s lasting commitment to democratic reconstruction after the Second World War. Of course I am referring to the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan was a bold, daring, and forward-thinking plan for long-term democratic consolidation that focused on economic reconstruction and the development of civil society. Again, this is an example of our democratic partnership in action.

We should not forget that the Marshall Plan was also offered to the Soviet Union and the countries behind the iron curtain. Knowing that our security and prosperity was inextricably linked with that of Europe, our leaders at the time made what they considered to be a rational investment in our common future. The Marshall Plan was a success because it was a joint effort by the U.S. and Europe to rebuild after the cataclysm of war and to prevent such a war from ever happening again.

I repeat all of this history because it lies at the foundation of the Euro-Atlantic alliance, which Slovenia is now an important part of, and which the other states of the former Yugoslavia very much want to join. I also mention the history of our transatlantic partnership because when we failed to respond to threats to security on the continent, the effect was devastating. Let’s be clear about one thing: without the strong leadership of the United States and NATO in the past 12 years, the stability and prosperity of Slovenia and all the Balkans would look very different—and much worse—today.

While many in Europe were focusing their attention on the noble task of European integration, the city of Sarajevo burned only a few hundred miles from here. The international community, unwilling and unable to stop the slaughter of Srebrenica, stood idly by as yet another genocide took place. But finally, the United States and NATO responded with military force, and the Dayton Agreement has gradually brought stability and greater hope for a democratic future to Bosnia. Again, U.S.-European partnership in action.

When Kosovars were driven from their homes in 1998-99, the same argument could be heard. Thankfully, action was finally taken to stop the slaughter in Kosovo. During the past ten years, the United States has remained committed in both of these cases to the establishment of democracy and a free society. It has been European-American partnership in action that put an end to a potential genocide that might otherwise still be taking place.

The sudden attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 launched our country into a global conflict and began a period of serious reflection on America's place in the world.

This attack demonstrated with great clarity that tyranny in far away lands cannot be ignored without potentially exacting an enormous price.

We should not forget that the attack of September 11 was also preceded by terrorist acts against the United States, from the first bombing at the World Trade Center, to the attacks on American embassies in Africa in 1998, and the attack on the USS Cole. But al-Qaeda's amazing success at penetrating the American homeland made it clear to all Americans that this was a war that had to be engaged with all the resources at hand. Significantly, and gratefully for us Americans, NATO invoked for the first time in history Article 5, which calls for a collective NATO response for an attack on a member. The world's defeat of al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan are a product of that global response, and the progress made in transforming Afghanistan into a democratic state represent a victory that all of us—including Slovenia—should take satisfaction in.

September the 11th also provided a warning of *future* dangers—of terror networks aided by outlaw regimes, of ideologies that incite the murder of the innocent, and of the cataclysmic threat posed by biological, chemical and nuclear weapons in the hands of a fanatic. It is clear that those who choose to ignore or minimize these threats will only endanger themselves and others.

The Madrid bombings of March 11, 2004 are but one more reminder that security in a global world cannot be confined to state boundaries or ethnic groups. The U.S. and Europe are in this together. We are all vulnerable and we must all work together if we wish to eradicate this scourge of the 21st century.

The United States has laid out a vision and a strategy to combat terrorism and provide security to our citizens. We must go after the terrorists and root out their networks of terror and destruction. Just as importantly, we must, as an international community, make a serious and sustained effort to bring democracy to those societies that breed terrorism.

Over the nineties we saw in Iraq what happens when a dictatorship controls the political life of a country, responsible opposition cannot develop, and dissent is driven out of the country or destroyed. The coalition's defeat of Iraq in 1991 in the first gulf war was not enough to bring stability to the area. Saddam continued to develop chemical weapons to murder his own citizens, to support terrorism throughout the Middle East, to plot assassinations of world leaders, and to starve his own people by misusing the funds from the UN Oil for Food program.

In an important book published recently, the former Soviet dissident and human rights activist Natan Sharansky discussed the basic division of the world into "free societies" and what he called "fear societies." The simple test of whether a society is free or ruled by fear is to ask oneself the following question: if you were to walk into a public square, could you express your views freely or would you fear reprisals. This simple test speaks volumes about the society you live in. While we in the United States and in Slovenia

today both have the luxury of living in free societies, we all know of many societies that do not.

In the world of the 21st century, where peoples are tied together closely, we Americans and Europeans can no longer look at the challenges of the world political scene as Neville Chamberlain did in September 1938, when he argued that we have no stake in "a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing."

Let me be clear. When I speak of our commitment to a democratic partnership in action, I am not just talking about supporting free elections. In addition to elections, one needs the rule of law, democratic accountability, and the protection of the rights of individuals and minorities. Democracy building is not a one-time event; it is a long and arduous process that requires time, commitment, and patience.

History has proven that the most stable and secure societies are built on democracy, respect for human rights, free and fair elections, an open, tolerant civil society and responsive state institutions that are accountable to the people they are meant to serve. Democracy is messy, and at times it doesn't seem very efficient. But Churchill's ironic praise of democracy is still very true today: "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

During the past few years we've witnessed some riveting scenes of resurgent democracy around the world. Beginning with the Revolution of the Roses in Georgia, and then with the first free elections in Afghanistan, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, free elections within the Palestinian Authority, and again in Iraq under very difficult conditions, we are witnessing another global wave of democracy sweeping over the planet. And let's not forget the popular movements for democracy in Lebanon and the ongoing tulip revolution in Kyrgyzstan over the last few weeks.

However, as Bosnia and Kosovo have taught us, we need to be focused not just on elections but also on the institutionalization of democracy, which as I've said is going to require time, commitment, and patience. The United States and Europe have been patient in Bosnia and we are being patient in Kosovo. It is because of our commitment to the long-term success of democracy and freedom in both Bosnia and Kosovo that we have made it clear that Bosnia absolutely must turn over its war criminals to the International Tribunal before any negotiations over NATO's Partnership for Peace can begin. It is for the same reason that we have been steadfast in insisting that talks on the final status of Kosovo must be preconditioned on the fulfillment and implementation of democratic standards.

In Georgia and Ukraine, in Afghanistan and Iraq, in the Palestinian Authority and throughout the Middle East, we have one overarching goal, and that is helping these governments institutionalize democratic standards as a means to assure long-term stability and ultimately prosperity for the people of those countries. Encouraging democracy is a generational commitment. It's also a difficult commitment, demanding

patience and resolve -- when the headlines are good and when the headlines aren't so good. But to claim as many cynics in the media have that it's not worth spreading democracy because there are temporary setbacks is both cowardly and naive. Ask a Czech or a Pole whether it was worth fighting fascism or communism. Ask a Bosnian or a Kosovar whether it was worth halting genocide. Ask an Iraqi whether it was worth getting rid of Saddam's prison chambers. History will ultimately judge who was on the right side of democracy and freedom. And when Kurds and Sunnis and Shiites celebrate the founding of Iraqi democracy 20 years from now, they will remember who was on their side.

The United States deeply appreciates Slovenia's support of our democratic partnership in action. We greatly appreciate the help that the Slovenian government has provided to peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. We are also grateful for the security assistance that Slovenia has contributed to Afghanistan. And we welcome any further security assistance that Slovenia might be able to provide in Iraq because the goal in each of these cases is the same: to help democracy institutions take root. And for that we need security first and foremost.

Slovenia now offers another unique opportunity to further our democratic partnership in action through its role as Chairman in Office of the OSCE. The OSCE was founded on the principle that human rights are universal, as enshrined in the original Helsinki Accords. As the OSCE has developed over the years, it has taken on an increasingly important role in promoting both human rights and democratic consolidation. Critics of the OSCE are now trying to argue that democratic values are not universal. The United States and Europe should forcefully reject these relativistic arguments and insist that the OSCE remain engaged in promoting both democracy and human rights. We very much hope that Slovenia, as Chairman in Office, will be a leader in promoting democratic values and human rights whenever and wherever they need to be defended.

Our goal is essentially the same in every part of the world. We are working with governments from Bosnia and Kosovo to Afghanistan and Iraq to build stable, peaceful and democratic societies -- societies where anyone can walk into a public square—man or woman—and express whatever views they hold dearest. While we're not there yet, that is the mission the president has laid out and I assure you that the United States is committed to seeing this mission through to the end.

European-U.S. democratic partnership in action must address global problems of various types. One such effort that we can all be proud of was our united response to the Tsunami catastrophe that devastated Southeast Asia last December. To date, I am happy to note that the U.S. government has committed $950 million to this colossal humanitarian effort, and with the help of other nations around the world, we've raised a total of approximately $4 billion.

In addition to this official governmental response, I think it's also worth mentioning that U.S. private-sector contributions to tsunami relief are expected to reach $700 million when fundraising is complete. Indeed, throughout the United States, charitable

organizations ranging from national nonprofits to local community groups are engaged in fundraising efforts to assist tsunami survivors. I am glad to see that individual Slovenians and charity groups are also contributing to this reconstruction effort. It is this resolve to help others in tragedy that testifies to our common interests and values.

The point I'm trying to make here is that Americans and Europeans are most effective when we work together. We are already working together to promote development and lift developing nations out of poverty so that new generations don't grow up turning to the politics of despair and anger. Together, we created the Monterrey Consensus, which links new aid from developed nations to real reform in developing ones. This strategy is working. Throughout the developing world, governments are confronting corruption, the rule of law is taking root, and people are enjoying new freedoms.

Through the Millennium Challenge Account, the United States is increasing aid to developing nations that govern justly, expand economic freedom, and invest in the education and health of their people. Instead of subsidizing failure year after year, as has been too often the case in the last 50 years of development assistance, we are rewarding progress and improving lives. We are happy to see that many of our European partners agree with us on this point.

Our alliance must also work together to protect the precious common natural resources on our planet. This requires addressing the serious, long-term challenge of global climate change. I know, I know, this is where so many stand up and say, "but you haven't ratified Kyoto." Well, there's a very good reason for that, and it is despite the fact that the vast majority of Americans, like Europeans, are seriously concerned about global climate change. The U.S. Senate voted 95-0—that's 95 to 0, unanimity among Democrats and Republicans alike—against the Kyoto Protocol because it was clear to them that this treaty would have had a devastating effect on our economy without holding many of the world's worst polluters accountable for reducing emissions. The implementation of the Kyoto Treaty would have meant the loss of nearly $400 billion in U.S. GDP, and up to 4.9 million lost American jobs, many of which would have been exported overseas to developing countries with lower environmental standards. And let's not kid ourselves. If U.S. GDP drops, it means the economies of Europe will also suffer, that is, lower GDP, fewer jobs. And we were not prepared to ratify a treaty whose tenets we could not meet. We shouldn't forget that a good number of the signatories in Europe will fail to meet their targets for the same reason: they are not prepared, at a time of troubled growth, to see further drops in GDP and jobs.

Our approach recognizes that economic growth is the solution, not the problem, because growth provides the resources to invest in clean technologies.

Let me emphasize again that the United States is committed to finding new non-polluting forms of energy to protect the environment. We should not forget that Earth Day began 35 years ago this month in the United States. The International Fusion Reactor, ITER, a multilateral collaboration much in the news these days, began almost nineteen years ago as a U.S.-Soviet initiative. And the US is at the forefront of developing new emerging

technologies such as hydrogen-powered vehicles, electricity from renewable energy sources, and clean coal technology that can encourage economic growth that is environmentally responsible. By researching, developing, and promoting new technologies across the world, all nations, including developing countries, can advance economically while slowing the growth in global greenhouse gases.

Three years ago President Bush committed the United States to an ambitious climate change strategy that will reduce domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions relative to the size of the American economy. The United States will achieve this goal by cutting its GHG intensity – how much it emits per unit of economic activity – by 18 percent over the next 10 years. This plan will prevent more than 500 million metric tons of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere – equivalent to taking 70 million cars off the road.

Finally, what is often missed by the media, the U.S. has pledged $5.8 billion (billion with a b) for addressing global climate change in 2005 alone. The President's plan gives companies incentives to cut emissions, diversifies the country's energy supply to include cleaner fuels, promotes conservation, and increases research and development and tax incentives for energy efficiency and clean technologies.

Since the President's international climate change program was outlined in 2002, the United States has established bilateral and regional partnerships that will cover over 72 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. These partnerships involve Slovenia and the other countries of the European Union, Australia, Canada, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and seven Central American countries. In addition, the United States is assisting key developing countries in their efforts to build the policy, scientific and technological capacity they need to address climate change.

I hope that in this talk I have managed to outline a few areas where bold new leadership and vision can be applied for our mutual benefit. Our partnership has the ability, and I would say the duty, to create a more stable, prosperous, cleaner, and safer world where democracy and freedom are the norm, not the exception.

We know there are many obstacles, and we know the road is long. But optimism is in the air and democracy is on the march. The rationale for our promotion of democracy and freedom is a simple one, one that Slovenians should understand well, because it was so well expressed by your national poet, France Prešeren: "prost bo vsak, ne vrag, le sosed bo mejak---all men free shall no more foes, but neighbors be." This should be the aim of our foreign policy, European and American alike, and I like to believe that that is the direction we are headed.

Ladies and Gentlemen: thank you for your attention.